

EDITORIAL: ON YOUNG MEDIEVALISTS

SVMMA Editorial Board

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Everybody knows some bright boy or girl who decides to enrol in a master's degree and a doctorate, with or without funding, and, at the same time, has to give classes, schedule trips and research stays abroad, and comply with all the requirements expected from a young researcher. They are competent in foreign languages and skilled in using the informatic tools within their reach.

Sooner or later, however, the grant ends, and the doctoral thesis is completed. Sometimes they are even awarded by the university itself or other institutions, they publish their work in journals, conference proceedings and books, and some of them even see their thesis published.

Once this training period comes to an end, what awaits them? Nothing. A few of them achieve a postdoctoral fellowship, which does little more than extend their agony. The university is unable to absorb them, perpetuating the problem of the lack of regeneration, and there is no room for them either in other institutions and research centers, given that the number of research positions is steadily decreasing.

Thus, without a future, universities train brilliant researchers who end up making a living outside their country, or working on anything but what they were trained for while trying to maintain their connection with the academic world. We are mere spectators of this situation, who can not offer anything but include them as collaborators in our research projects, hoping to someday restore them to full researchers.

But the machine never stops, and many more come just after them, as brilliant as them, as well prepared and with the same enthusiasm as them. And history repeats itself. The successive promotions of recent doctors pile up at the end of the cycle, and make it increasingly hard to save even one of them. In other countries, in other environments, they would do anything to keep the potential of these researchers who, let us not forget, have been trained at a high cost to our society but are nonetheless relegated to oblivion, as if we had enough to spare.

As teachers and researchers this situation hurts us, while it increases the sense of futility of our work.

How long will this last? How long will young researchers have to endure this lack of expectations? For how long will governments remain blind to this grievous situation? If we want a prosperous country, we can not squander the best grey matter that we have managed to train with so much effort. We can not afford to lose, or export, any researcher. In order to build a country, the knowledge of all disciplines is necessary, also of the so-called Humanities and within them, also in the field of medievalism.

Facing such a situation, what do these young people do? Someone might think that they drop out or throw in the towel and engage in other activities far removed from their training, but they don't. Nearby we have an edifying example that proves it. A group of young people organized and created an association, ARDIT (Association for Interdisciplinary Research and Dissemination in Medieval Cultures). The name says it all, the *ardits* (literally, the bold) are daring, brave, strong and confident and show their capacity in different environments every day: they manage IRCVM's most successful publication, the blog "*Medievalistes en bloc*" at the website of the magazine *Sàpiens*, online for two years now with weekly posts (<http://blogs.sapiens.cat/medievalistesenbloc/>); they organize international conferences (the 2nd ARDIT International Congress of Medievalists entitled: *Sense and Sensuality in the Middle Ages*, to be held in Barcelona on 20-22 May 2015 (<http://arditcongress.weebly.com/>); they celebrate research workshops such as the *III Jornada Ardit de Networking en Recerca Interdisciplinària* held on 21 November 2014 (<http://arditculturesmedievals.weebly.com/networking.html>); they promote MOOCs in collaboration with the IRCVM and the Master's Degree in Medieval Cultures; they create medieval music groups, such as Ardit Ensemble and dare to tackle major works of medieval music, such as *Hildegard of Bingen's Ordo Virtutum*, first showed in July 2014 (<http://arditensemble.wordpress.com/>). Their activity is evident at their Facebook, and Twitter accounts and at their website (<http://arditculturesmedievals.weebly.com/>).

IRCVM members can take comfort in the fact that the Institute, which has served us as a meeting point between different disciplines and has allowed us to establish links with researchers previously rather unknown to us, has been for them the basis of the interdisciplinarity they regularly practice. The *Seminaris en tàndem* (<http://arditculturesmedievals.weebly.com/seminaris-en-tagravendem.html>) exemplify it, as well as the sessions of the *Seminar of Doctoral Studies* (<http://arditculturesmedievals.weebly.com/seminaris-destudis-doctorals.html>) they periodically hold. For those of them who manage to find a stable position as researchers in the future, interdisciplinarity will be their bread and butter rather than an exception, as it has been for many of us, and that is good.

Now it is our turn to respond to their enthusiasm, seeking solutions to their situation, pulling strings, whether institutional or not, to offer them something more than oblivion, demanding the attention of the authorities and showing this reality whenever we have the chance to do so. We must act together and be aware that the future is in their hands.